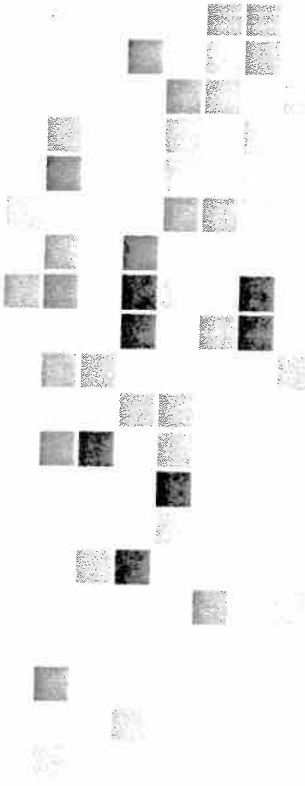


CHAPTER 15



Vendors of Cataloging for Children's Materials

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Many libraries purchase cataloging from a vendor to save time and money. An initial expenditure of time on the part of the librarian can greatly enhance the entire experience as well as the resulting cataloging (and, often, the processing) product.

Where to get cataloging is the first consideration, and several sources are available. Three major sources are (1) book wholesalers or prebinders, (2) cataloging service or software vendors, and (3) bibliographic utilities.

Wholesalers and prebinders. Hundreds of book and audiovisual wholesalers and book prebinding companies are in business, and most offer some sort of cataloging or processing or both for materials purchased from them. Some also offer cataloging for materials they sell but that may not have been purchased directly from them.

Cataloging vendors. Some vendors offer cataloging products and services either online or on CD-ROM. There are also software programs that download MARC records using the Z39.50 protocol.

Bibliographic utilities. Not-for-profit bibliographic networks, such as OCLC, also called bibliographic utilities, use computer databases

of member-supplied cataloging records. Libraries using these services sign a membership agreement, often arranged through a local or regional library network.

Whichever route you take, a thorough evaluation of the library's collection will aid considerably in the process. This appraisal is critical if the chosen vendor will be cataloging and processing materials purchased. The basic choices are Dewey or Library of Congress call numbers and Library of Congress or Sears subject headings. After that, the decisions get a bit more complicated.

CALL NUMBERS

Concerns regarding call numbers involve local policies governing the assignment of classification numbers and the addition of book numbers. If Dewey is used, the following questions arise:

- Should the source for the numbers be the abridged edition or the unabridged edition?
- Are the numbers carried to the first slash? Two digits past the decimal? Four digits past the decimal?
- Are author letters or Cutter numbers used? If so, how many characters or digits will be assigned?
- How are the biographies classified? In 921? In B? Will they be shelved in a separate section or mixed with other nonfiction?
- Where are the easy readers and picture books? Are they marked E or P, or something else?
- Are there special collections that require a prefix (for example, reference, professional collection, foreign language, story collections)?
- If automated, in which tag and subfield divisions do the call numbers belong?

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Questions about subject headings include the following:

- What subject authority will be used: *Library of Congress Subject Headings* for adults, the Library of Congress's Children's Subject

Headings (formerly known as Annotated Card or AC headings), or *Sears List of Subject Headings*?

- Is the number of subject headings assigned to an individual item limited?
- Are there other local policies that affect the assignment of subject headings?

READING PROGRAMS

Specialized processing to facilitate reading programs requires asking the following:

- If a reading program is used, how are the books identified?
- If the catalog records are automated, are there special requirements for this field tag (field 521 in the MARC format)?

SERIES

With recent changes to cataloging practice by the Library of Congress regarding how series are treated and recorded in the MARC records LC creates, catalogers may wish to ask the following:

- Where in the MARC record will the series be recorded, and will these series titles be searchable?
- Can the author's name be taken out of the series?
- If the local automation system can't handle 830 field tags, will the vendor put the series title in a 440 tag?

PHYSICAL PROCESSING

Choices about physical processing include the following:

- Does the library want materials to be given covers or not?
- Does the library want cards and pockets inserted into materials, and, if so, where should they be placed?
- Are barcodes going to be applied? If so, where will they be placed on the materials?

OTHER SERVICES

As innovations are made in cataloging and automation, catalogers might want to check with vendors they are considering to determine the following:

- Does the vendor offer Spanish-language subject headings? If so, which thesaurus or subject authority does the vendor use?
- How are the Spanish-language subject headings tagged, and will the coding work with the library's automation system?
- Does the vendor offer subject headings in other foreign languages?
- Does the vendor offer curriculum subject headings? If so, which thesaurus or authority does the vendor use?
- How are the curriculum subject headings tagged, and will the coding work with the library's automation system?
- Are the curriculum headings matched to state or national standards?

Armed with the information gained from answering the preceding questions, you can select vendors who meet most of your needs.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

Other vital questions to ask potential vendors include the following:

- Where does the vendor obtain its cataloging records?
- Are the cataloging records reviewed? Do professional catalogers conduct the reviews?
- Does every MARC record have an annotation or summary note?
- How does the vendor handle updates in descriptive cataloging rules, call numbers, and subject headings? For example, how did the company deal with the conversion to ISBN-13? What accommodations were made (if any) for customers whose automation systems couldn't handle the thirteen-digit numbers?
- Does the vendor use authority files? If so, which authority files are used, and how are they maintained?

- Which descriptive cataloging standards does the vendor follow? If the vendor uses AACR2, can the library choose a desired bibliographic level, or does the vendor offer only one level?
- What are the vendor's plans for the implementation of RDA (*Resource Description and Access*)?
- What procedure is used if a question arises about specifications, cataloging, or processing?
- What is the procedure for special cataloging requests?
- Are the library's cataloging specifications kept on file, or must they be submitted with each order?
- How are MARC records sent to the library?

POST-SELECTION ISSUES

If more than one vendor is selected, be sure that each one receives the same specifications for cataloging the library's materials, so records from all of them can be integrated seamlessly into the library's catalog.

The process does not end once a vendor has been selected; contracts have been negotiated, specifications have been recorded and filed, and cataloging products are received. The cataloging records, whether on cards or in a computer file, should be reviewed for completeness, accuracy, and adherence to the library's specific collection and call number requests. Cataloging records need to be evaluated more than once or twice and should be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Changes to a vendor's personnel, policies, and procedures can result in changes to its products that affect the library's catalog positively or negatively.

Vendors should be evaluated periodically for adherence to bibliographic standards and the implementation of changes in standard cataloging practices, call numbers, and subject headings. Attention to problems that crop up, prompt delivery of catalog records and other services, and costs should also be monitored and evaluated periodically. At the same time, the library should be prompt in paying its bills and informing its vendors of such events as initiating new collections, changing library specifications, or implementing new OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogs). Efforts on the part of the library to develop and maintain good relationships with vendors help to ensure that children or adults using the catalog will always receive high-quality service.

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www.loc.gov

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